

Mandela's unconditional release sharply contrasts with an offer five years ago by the

Quote of the week

"I have spoken out against [Clause 28] and marched against it, but nothing can change until Thatcher is out — she'll have about two more years, and I do not believe she can win another election. However, the end of Thatcher is *not* the end of our problems. The danger, as far as Clause 28 is concerned, is that by then the gay population may be *used* to that legislation, and they may become so pleased by a change of government that they don't immediately lobby it and demand an *end* to the anti-gay legislation.

"People by and large want a more liberal government, but a more liberal government than Thatcher's will still not necessarily be fair-minded toward the gay population.... Gay people must *not* become complacent, they must remain politically active."

— *British actress Glenda Jackson, in a recent interview in the New York Native. Jackson, who in her nearly 30-year show business career has played many strong women characters and been awarded two Best Actress Oscars, also said she feels that gay male writers write better female characters as well as better stories in general. Jackson added that she likes working with gay actors because they aren't threatened by her and because their acting is more "open." "Just look at John Wayne or Clint Eastwood," she said, "from their performances you'd know they're not gay. They're so wooden."*

A kiss is just a kiss

COBOURG, Ontario — In the process of falling in love, Colleen and Jill were taking a romantic stroll along the shores of Lake Ontario on Dec. 24 last year. As they embraced and kissed for the first time, they noticed a photographer in the distance. According to *GO Info*, the two women joked about the possibility of their romantic moment being printed in a local newspaper.

Two days later, a picture of two lovers in an embrace, but with their backs to the camera, appeared in the *Cobourg Daily Star*. The caption read, "Quiet moment — Cobourg's harbour was the setting for this tender scene between two sweethearts. The icy weather has turned the water into a sea of snowdrifts."

Jill's mother noticed the "lovely" picture and showed it to her daughter, who had not come out to her family. The photo both initiated Jill's coming out process ("They're adjusting pretty well," she said), and sealed the couple's anniversary date, Dec. 24, 1989.

□ Kelly Gaines

Gay priest forced out of ministry



Bishop Spong ordained Williams, Dec. 16

HOBOKEN, N.J. — An openly gay Episcopal priest who was just ordained here last December has resigned as head of a gay ministry because of remarks he made about celibacy and monogamy. According to the *New York Times*, the Rev. Robert J. Williams' right to serve as a priest has already been suspended.

Williams, who was ordained amidst a fanfare of publicity last Dec. 16 (see *GCN*, Jan. 7), was asked to give up his position as director of the Oasis, a ministry serving lesbians and gay men, after saying he "can't say anything good about celibacy. I think it comes out of a *sex-negative* philosophy."

Williams made his comments in a Detroit church last month. In addition to chastising celibacy, Williams also said that monogamy "is not a requirement for a valid marriage. The bottom line for me is that sexual exclusivity is an option a couple may or may not choose as a part of making covenant together.... I am more concerned with faithfulness than monogamy." Williams was also chided for implying that, like anyone, Mother Theresa would be better off if she engaged in sexual activity.

Following publication of Williams' remarks, Bishop John S. Spong of the Newark Diocese demanded Williams' resignation, saying, "the tragedy is that we hurt the very people we were trying to help." Spong, considered a radical in the Episcopal church, personally championed Williams' right to be a priest and, in fact, ordained Williams and appointed him head of the Oasis. "I can handle my enemies; it's my friends I have trouble with," he said.

Spong suspended Williams' right to serve as a priest pending an investigation into possible fraud during the screening process that led to the ordination. The bishop said that the standing committee and the commission on ministry will review their initial decision favoring Williams' ordination.

□ Kelly Gaines

NOW seeks lesbian input in upcoming conference

WASHINGTON — Lesbians are encouraged to submit workshop proposals for the National Organization for Women's (NOW) 1990 National Conference in San Francisco.

Although proposals on all subjects are welcome, NOW is especially interested in four topics: the impact of the AIDS movement on other lesbian rights issues, the integration of lesbian rights into the consciousness of abortion rights activists, legal strategies to further the right of privacy, and issues of importance to lesbians of color.

The conference will be held June 29-July 1. The deadline for workshop proposals is March 1. For more information, contact Nancy Buermeyer or Pam Hughes at (202) 331-0066.

□ Kelly Gaines

Gay writers gather on the west coast

SAN FRANCISCO — *Out/Look*, a quarterly lesbian and gay journal, will sponsor "the first-ever national lesbian and gay writers conference" here March 3-4.

Among the confirmed participants of *Out/Write '90* are Sarah Schulman, Dennis Cooper, Pat Califia, Thom Gunn, Marilyn Hacker, Michael Nava, Jewelle Gomez, John Preston, Dorothy Allison, Kevin Killian, George Stambolian, Barbara Wilson, Essex Hemphill and Tee Corinne. Allen Ginsberg and Judy Grahn will be the keynote speakers at the conference, which will also feature panels and workshops of interest to gay and lesbian writers, editors and literary agents.

General registration is \$40 for both days of \$20 for either Saturday or Sunday. For more information, write to *Out/Write '90*, c/o *Out/Look-Conference*, 2940 16th St., Suite 319, San Francisco, CA, 94103.

□ Kelly Gaines

Gay men tortured in Romania

HUNGARY — Following the toppling of Nicholae Ceausescu's regime in nearby Romania, gay activists here are now speaking out against atrocities committed against gay men under Ceausescu. Since the the revolution against the Romanian dictator began Dec. 17, activists too afraid to come forward before have said that for the past two years gay men have been arrested, interrogated and tortured, according to *Philadelphia Gay News*.

Laszlo Rusvai and Sandor Borsos publish a new gay paper in Hungary, *MAS*, and are members of the international committee of HOMEROS Lambda. Rusvai and Borsos interviewed three gay men who had been arrested in Romania and subsequently escaped

to Hungary. They said that although the men had originally described the arrests and torture in graphic detail for publication in the newspaper, they later decided to withhold the interview out of fear of retribution.

Rusvai and Borsos said the initial crack-down began in the western part of the country, near the city of Arad. Men who were arrested were forced to name and give addresses of other gay men, who were then also arrested. Once in jail, said Rusvai, "the police would tie two of the gays together around a large stick, then place the stick on two desktops not very far apart, and then rotate it like a barbecue, all the time beating them. They called it 'the grill.'"

"Besides the beatings and torture," he said, "they were made to have sex with each other in the presence of guards who took photographs of it."

Borsos said that over 100 men had been tortured and arrested over the last two years. "Some of them committed suicide by jumping out of the prison windows," he said.

□ Debbie Rich

Gay group forms on the Cape

BREWSTER, Mass. — About 200 people from the greater Cape Cod area came together Jan. 27 to celebrate the passage of the state's gay rights bill and to form a new gay and lesbian rights organization. Among the goals of the new Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Issues and Concerns, representing people from the Cape and Islands of Massachusetts, will be combating anti-gay violence and hostility and organizing outreach services in churches and schools. The group will also be working against the gay rights law repeal effort. For more information, call (508) 771-1727.

□ Carrie Wofford

Anti-gay group gets enough referendum signatures

BOSTON — Sponsors of a referendum on the Massachusetts gay rights law announced Feb. 12 that they have enough signatures to place a referendum on the 1990 ballot. The repeal referendum still appears likely to lose a constitutional challenge to its validity as a topic for a referendum.

According to Massachusetts Secretary of State Michael Connelly's office, Citizens for Family First collected 45,212 valid signatures, well above the 25,000 necessary for a referendum.

In order for the referendum to be on the ballot, the anti-gay organization must win a legal appeal against Attorney General James Shannon at the Supreme Judicial Court (SJC) level. According to Kevin Cathcart of the Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders, the case is likely to be heard at the beginning of April and a decision might not be rendered until early summer.

Said Cathcart, "I am cautiously optimistic that we will win at the SJC, but I'm not saying that's a sure thing. We have to begin to organize as if there will be a referendum."

According to Arline Isaacson of the Massachusetts Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus, a broad mobilization of gay civil rights supporters is needed. "We will have to put our differences aside — every gay and lesbian organization that's ever worked on the bill will have to work on this."

□ Laura Briggs

FDA approves new drug

WASHINGTON — The Food and Drug Administration approved a new drug to treat two AIDS-related opportunistic infections Jan. 29, according to the *Boston Globe*.

The drug, fluconazole, is an anti-viral used to treat cryptococcal meningitis, a serious brain infection, and candidiasis, an infection of the mouth and throat. Candidiasis is also known as thrush, a condition present in most people with advanced AIDS.

Ray Schmidt of ACT UP/Boston said that prior to the FDA's approval, fluconazole has been available on a very limited basis from Pfizer, the drug's manufacturer.

Schmidt told *GCN* that it seems to have fewer side effects than amphotericine B, the primary drug which has been used to treat meningitis.

According to the *New York Times* the drug will be supplied by Pfizer Inc. to wholesalers by Feb. 16.

□ Laura Briggs

Lesbian conference plans continue

ATLANTA — Plans for the National Lesbian Conference, to be held here in 1991, continue to be laid as an interim committee met last week to decide who will be represented on the Steering Committee for the conference. In addition to hammering out the details of representation, the group formed a hiring committee for two full-time conference staff positions.

Ayofemi Faloyan, a member of the interim steering committee who attended the Feb. 2-4 meeting in Atlanta, told *GCN* the first full meeting of the Steering Committee will take place this spring in the midwest, in conjunction with the third and final national organizing meeting. (See *GCN*, Oct. 22, 1989.) The Steering Committee will be made up of regional representatives, as well as representatives of various constituencies and national organizations.

The two staff members who will be hired are an organizer/activist, who will work with the Steering Committee to coordinate the Conference, and a fundraiser who will coordinate national fundraising. Both staffers will work out of the conference organizing office in Atlanta, which is scheduled to open in April. Both jobs are for one year (beginning March 26) and pay \$16-20,000. To apply, send resume and cover letter to: Hiring Committee, National Lesbian Conference, P.O. Box 3057, Albany, NY 12203.

□ Jennie McKnight

Les/gay Arabic groups growing

SAN FRANCISCO — Lesbians and gay men of Arabic origin or descent have been forming a national network through visible organizations here and in Washington, D.C. for over a year. The D.C.-based Gay and Lesbian Arabic Society of the U.S. (GLAS), which describes itself as "the first such group in the world — including the Middle East," is looking for members and other people interested in gay Arab issues.

According to Ramzi Zakharia, a GLAS founder, the group "provides Arab men and women with a support network and a vehicle for gay Arab visibility." Zakharia, a Palestinian gay man born and raised in Lebanon, said the organization sponsors social events, provides AIDS education and outreach, and publishes a newsletter.

In San Francisco, the Arabic Lesbian Network (ALN) formed last year and continues to grow. Palestinian-American lesbian Huda Jadalla told *GCN* that partly out of the successful organizing of Arabic lesbians, both a mixed-gender Arabic group — called the Arabic Lesbian and Gay Network (ALGN) — and a separate men's group were recently formed. Like GLAS, one of ALGN's primary goals is outreach and support.

In addition to "breaking the isolation" of lesbian and gay Arabs, the groups also seek visibility and to educate their communities. "We seek to be visible within the Arab community as lesbians and gay men," said Jadalla. "We try to dispel the myths and the stereotypes and to be a bridge between those groups."

Jadalla said that although the growing network includes Arabic lesbians and gay men from around the country, she knows of no organized groups other than those in San Francisco and Washington. She said efforts have been made to start such a group in New York, however.

For information about GLAS, write to: The Arabic Society, P.O. Box 4971, Washington, D.C. 20008. To contact the lesbian, gay or mixed Arabic groups in San Francisco, write to P.O. Box 460526, San Francisco, CA 94114.

□ Jennie McKnight



Chuck Stallard

Bush rudely greeted by coalition of activists

LOS ANGELES — More than 1000 activists from the AIDS, Central America and pro-choice movements disrupted a Republican fundraising dinner held at the opulent Century Plaza here Feb. 6. President George Bush and California Governor George Deukmejian attended the event to support and raise money for Sen. Pete Wilson (R-Calif.), who is running for governor in the wake of Deukmejian's departure. The demonstration was billed as an attempt to "Stop GOP Death Squads" in the U.S. and Central America.

Gunther Freehill told GCN that the demonstration was put together by "a real coalition of very different people." Freehill, who is a member of ACT UP/Los Angeles, praised the cooperation among activists from various movements, saying that everyone was "willing to use the same tactics to show that George Bush is killing people in El Salvador because of his policies on Central America, and killing people in the U.S. because of his anti-abortion stance and the woeful underfunding of the AIDS crisis."

The event was organized by ACT UP/Los Angeles and Days of Decision, a coalition of local groups organized against U.S. intervention in Central America.

Tactics used by the protesters included actions both inside and outside the hotel. Inside, six activists infiltrated the dinner, without paying the \$1000 ticket price, and shook up the Republican party several times. One inside protester was arrested. She was released the next day and was not formally charged.

Meanwhile, demonstrators chanted and picketed outside, bringing some guests to their balconies. (One man reportedly hung a banner from his balcony that read "Bush kills People with AIDS, Women, and Central Americans.") Protesters wore "dinner napkins" with pictures of the AIDS quilt and of Salvadoreans killed by the U.S. funded government and chanted "Money for AIDS, not for war, U.S. out of El Salvador."

Eventually, the protesters left the hotel courtyard and turned to the street, leading to an impromptu die-in. After about an hour, and mild confrontations with Los Angeles police officers, demonstrators were given an order to disperse within five minutes. As the protesters attempted to get out of the street, police arrested eight people who could not find room on the sidewalk. All were charged with failure to disperse. Freehill told GCN that two of the arrestees were East Germans who were visiting the United States.

Kelly Gaines

□ filed from Boston

Lesbian prof wins latest round in Berkeley battle

A judge upholds Merle Woo's refusal to undergo psychiatric tests

By Jennie McKnight

BERKELEY, Calif. — In the latest round of the ongoing employment struggle between Asian American socialist feminist Merle Woo and the University of California



Merle Woo

at Berkeley (UCB), a judge told the university that its motion to require Woo to undergo psychiatric examination was "abusive and frivolous," according to the Merle Woo Defense Committee.

UCB requested the examination as part of the "discovery" process in a state lawsuit Woo filed to enforce an arbitrator's ruling that Woo be reinstated by UCB (see GCN, Dec. 3 and March 12, 1989). Woo refused to submit to the examination, calling UCB's request an abuse of the discovery process,

which allows both sides in a legal suit to gather information for their cases.

Woo told GCN that UCB attempted to drop the motion after Alameda Superior Court Judge Dawn Girard issued a preliminary ruling in Woo's favor January 24. "The decision shows people we don't have to be afraid of the law," said Woo, adding that the Defense Committee had prepared the legal briefs for the case themselves, without the aid of a lawyer.

Woo said she thought it was important to fight UCB instead of submitting to the psychiatric test in part to set an example for other UC employees who might fear retribution if they filed a grievance. By requesting the examination, said Woo, "UCB sent the message that 'If you start to fight back, we're going to put you on trial instead.'"

Woo's case against the university began in 1982, when she was denied reappointment to her position in the Asian American studies department where she was a lecturer. Woo filed state and federal lawsuits against UCB, charging discrimination based on race, sex, sexual orientation and political ideology. Woo reached a settlement with UCB in 1984, only to be fired again in 1986. The grievance she filed at that time was settled in February of 1989 when an arbitrator ruled that UCB had to reinstate Woo with full back pay and benefits.

Despite the arbitrator's ruling a year ago, Woo has yet to be reappointed. She said the offer UCB made last summer was not acceptable because it was not in her fields of ex-

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Historic symposium on lesbian writers of color

Barbara Smith moderates a panel featuring Jewelle Gomez, Chrystos, Merle Woo and Luz Maria Umpierre-Herrera

By Alycee J. Lane

SANTA BARBARA, Calif. — Gathering at what Black lesbian feminist activist Barbara Smith hailed as "an historic event," over 75 women and men converged on the University of California-Santa Barbara campus February 3 for a Lesbians of Color Writers Symposium.

The symposium — conceptualized and moderated by Smith who was serving as a visiting UC Regent lecturer — featured writers Jewelle Gomez, Chrystos, Merle Woo, and Luz Maria Umpierre-Herrera.

"Lesbians of color writers are often in the forefront of movements to eradicate sexual oppression," declared Smith, "yet we are generally excluded from conferences on women's oppression" due to racism and homophobia. The symposium is "an historic event because never before has such a gathering been convened — at least not to my knowledge."

Each of the writers took turns addressing why she writes and what influences her writing.

"The breakthrough moment for me in terms of my writing," claimed African American poet Jewelle Gomez, "was seeing Ntozake Shange's *For Colored Girls*.... It was then that I realized that I *could* write about women, and once I realized this, I couldn't stop writing."

Gomez is the author of two poetry collections, *The Lipstick Papers* and *Flamingoes and Bears*, and is currently the assistant director of the literature program for the New York State Council on the Arts. Her

desire to write, she said, was inspired by the stories her grandmother told while combing her hair. "We have to pass our stories down from generation to generation. This is the only way we can ensure that we preserve our history."

Native American poet Chrystos, whom Smith introduced as an internationally known "trouble maker" and "sex maniac" — much to the delight of the audience — said that her writing "is driven by politics rather than aesthetics." Active in the movement against the U.S. government's attempts to remove Native Americans from Big Mountain, Chrystos, in much of her poetry, deals with the struggles Native Americans face.

"We must bring ethics to writing," she said in reference to the racist images of Native Americans in literature. "We must not use words that are detrimental to another group of people." Chrystos, a member of the Menominee tribe, is the author of *Not Vanishing*.

"My poetry is an accusation against those seeking to steal my identity and is the most effective medium to express the effects of exile on me as a Puerto Rican Lesbian," proclaimed Luz Maria Umpierre-Herrera. A professor of modern languages and intercultural studies at Western Kentucky University and author of *And Other Misfortunes* and *The Margarita Poems*, Umpierre-Herrera described three "stages" of her writing: the effort to deal with racism, the

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Conn. activists stage civil disobedience at state Capitol

A mostly lesbian group disrupts the governor's speech

By William John Mann

HARTFORD, Conn. — Nearly two dozen lesbians and several gay men disrupted a major policy speech by Gov. William O'Neill at the Capitol here Feb. 7, the first day of the new session of the Connecticut General Assembly. Hundreds of people who had packed the chamber to mark the opening day and hear O'Neill's long-awaited speech on the state budget, were stunned when the protesters, who had gathered in the gallery, unfurled a pink banner reading "We demand Lesbian and Gay rights, Bill," — a reference to the governor's opposition to the state's gay rights bill that was defeated three times in the last decade. Most of the protesters belong to the newly formed Lesbian and Gay Direct Action Committee. There were 12 arrests.

The action visibly startled O'Neill, who awkwardly stood in silence at the podium until police escorted the demonstrators out of the gallery. He then resumed his speech without comment.

"The lesbian and gay community made a commitment that we would not disappear and would maintain a campaign of visibility," according to a statement by the committee, which has no official spokesperson. "For over 17 years, the lesbian and gay community has made concerted efforts to pass a civil rights bill in the Connecticut legislature. For 17 years we have acted on the advice of others in a manner which was defined as in our best interest. We are tired. We are tired of being held down by the brutal feet of oppression." Quoting from Martin Luther King, Jr., the statement added, "We have no alternative *but* to protest."

The action was largely organized and carried out by lesbians. "As lesbians, we face a dual wall of invisibility and oppression — as women and as gay people," said the group's statement. "We have, as women, as lesbians been involved in every major movement for social change, from the suffrage movement to labor movements to the civil rights movement to the peace movement to the women's

movement and, most recently, to the AIDS movement. While we have been in the forefront, we have been forced to take a back-seat because of our gender and our sexual orientation. We are here today to say we will no longer subscribe to a system that oppresses and fails to recognize our presence and worth as full human beings."



Cary Chapin

Connecticut gay and lesbian activists stun Gov. O'Neill, Feb. 7

Police, assigned to strategic points in the gallery to ensure that the Governor's speech was not disrupted, reacted nervously to the protest. They initially descended upon one group of people chanting "Lesbian rights, gay rights," which allowed another group of several women to unfurl and drop the banner over the railing. The banner hung from the gallery railing for a full minute before State Trooper Tony Murphy was able to, with much difficulty, rip it off.

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**GCN Job Opening
Staff Writer/Circulation
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Available in April/May. Research, investigate, and write news stories with a national scope and also stories about Boston/New England. May include some analytical/feature writing as well. Share responsibilities with other staff writer for coordinating weekly mailing of paper and processing subscriptions.

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Preventing rifts

Dear GCN:

I was shocked and saddened when I learned of the lawsuit filed by Bob Kevin against Crone’s Harvests’ practice of holding events for women only. As a gay man attempting to respond to the feminist critique of male-dominated society, I find Kevin’s lawsuit an embarrassment to the sensibilities of gay men and an affront to women.

Lesbian women meet each other, learn about one another, in different ways than we gay men. As men, we must admit that our gender gives us privilege, and that even our actions, conscious or unconscious, may sometimes suppress women’s ability to redefine themselves in a society which seeks to subjugate them. This is not to deny our own oppression as gay men, but we must respect another’s freedom to choose the company she keeps. Would Kevin want women at a safe sex party?

We must be aware of our differences as well as our similarities. I think one of the most important gifts we can give to our lesbian sisters is their own space, and our strong support and solidarity when they ask for it. We don’t have to insert ourselves unwanted into their struggle.

Kevin declares that “It’s the 90’s. We don’t do things like that anymore...” Doesn’t Kevin recall the massacre of the 14 women (“feminists” who had offended the gunman) in Montreal? Can he not see that women’s need for safe space is greater than ever?

Yes, it is the 90’s, and I think that I speak for a lot of gay men in pleading with Kevin to drop this needless and dangerous lawsuit. The last thing we need now is a split in our community. We need each other too much.

Brian Tognotti
New York, NY

Looking beyond the myth of oppression

Dear GCN:

I am getting sick and tired of hearing about ‘gay men’ not knowing what it is like to be oppressed as a woman. Face it folks, how many women are facing the oppression men suffer? I constantly hear women speaking in some special class of oppression — oppression is oppression. My point is that we (men and women) have to face the facts that just as women are conditioned into victim roles men are engineered into oppressor roles against their wills. Men’s conditioning comes purely from our fear of our feelings as men and our loss of the feeling that men are important figures as fathers, sons, brothers and husbands. Men have over time lost touch with important parts of themselves through warped understanding of the roles and boundaries; of being warriors, being led by older men into life learning and responsibility, and being aware of distinctively male feelings.

As far as Mr. Pigman’s letter is concerned, why do men always do the politically correct thing and claim the role of oppressor for ourselves? Why do we take the shit associated with it? Because I am a MAN...it’s silly. Naming the victim is accurate but what about the over-done use of naming of those miserable oppressors — men. Not all men oppress, but I don’t see why not when our culture is furthering the cause of oppression by saying men do it and women are always the victims. We ALL are victims and oppressors as people. We can’t escape this and as soon as we realize that we all have cast ourselves into roles of oppression, either as oppressors or victims (both are damaging by the way) then we will be able to gather closer as people.

Mr. Pigman is carrying things too far in saying that men are carriers of oppression with their very presence. How silly to say that — who is going to believe that? The presence of something doesn’t require it to play any role in oppression (it is the nurturing of oppression by men and the acceptance on the part of the oppressed to take the oppression). To close this long letter I beg the question: do you know the difficulty involved in being a man in this culture? A culture which constantly paints men as poor fathers, evil political figures, drinkers, unintelligent workers. The imagery goes on and on that men are not in any way in touch with themselves. They merely work, fuck, sleep and use the influence of being oppressors, and occasionally they cry in war movies when their buddy dies.

None of this even touches on the double burden of being a gay male: the shame of not oppressing women sexually and not being a real man. It is time gay men turn to each other and discuss why we take modulated statements from women that “all men are rapists.” Come on people — look beyond the myth of oppression and into what makes us play roles in the oppression wheel.

Phil Gauthier
Northampton, MA

Yes, it threatens patriarchy

Dear GCN:

I am writing in regard to the complaint initiated by Bob Kevin against Crone’s Harvest because of women only events. Women-only space is crucial in my life. I am more whole, more alive, more able to be part of life and to envision and work for a life free of patriarchy. What is so bad about women’s space? It threatens patriarchy, yes. For lesbians it is clear that patriarchy is not good for us as lesbians and women. For gay men it may be mixed — patriarchy falling means the loss of male privilege. No more women to do all the dirty work in the straight or gay world. But it also means a way of life in which we no longer live with domination and the fear of the earth’s destruction. Sounds like a good deal to me. In the ’90s as well as the ’70s I still see violence against women all around me as well as more subtle forms of oppression. I thank Mary Stockton for creating a place where women can be free of this. When gay men support women’s space, I feel we have similar goals and form a larger community. When they bring lawsuits against us, I feel they want patriarchy to continue and are my oppressors.

Debby Earthdaughter
Somerville, MA

Gay Community News is produced by a collective dedicated to providing coverage of events and news in the interest of gay and lesbian liberation. The collective consists of a paid staff of ten, a general membership of volunteers, and a board of directors elected by the membership.

Opinions reflected in “editorials” represent the views of the paid staff collective. Signed letters and columns represent the views and opinions of the authors only. We encourage all readers to send us comments, criticism, and information, and to volunteer and become members.

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Gay Community News is published weekly (except the last week of April, August and December), by the Bromfield Street Educational Foundation, Inc., a non-profit corporation. Our office is located at 62 Berkeley Street, Boston, MA 02116. (617) 426-4469. TTY/TDD 426-0332.

Second-class postage paid at Boston, Mass. Annual subscription rate is \$33. Institutional rate: \$40. ISSN: [0147-0728]. Member Gay and Lesbian Press Association, New England Press Association, Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, COSMEP member.

GCN is included in the Alternative Press Index, published quarterly by the Alternative Press Center, Inc., Box 33109, Baltimore, MD 21218.

Volumes 1-15 of **GCN** are available on microfilm for \$40/volume, \$550/complete set. Write **GCN/Microfilm** for more information.

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Bisexual invisibility

Dear *GCN*:

Much to my regret, for the first time in five years I will not be working on the steering committee for the Northampton Pride march. I would like you to know why.

As you know, last year the steering committee voted to include the word "bisexual" in the official title. (Bisexuals had been working on the march for years, without official acknowledgement.) A group of lesbians became quite upset about this, and I received several phone calls to that effect last year, some of which were quite verbally abusive.

This year, at the first steering committee meeting, six women came, (who had not served on the committee before), determined to get the word "bisexual" removed, saying that it makes them "invisible." They stated that at the next meeting, they would bring as many women as needed to accomplish this goal. At our next meeting, they brought forty women, who voted out the word "bisexual," and then stated that since the word bisexual was no longer in the title, a bisexual could not be on the committee, so I could no longer serve. (Now I am the one who is "invisible"). They also stated that they certainly would never allow a bisexual to do publicity, which had been one of my duties, besides coordinating peacekeeping.

Last year, there were 3000 gay people and their friends marching in Northampton to celebrate our gayness and our diversity. Gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, drag queens, leather people, straight friends and allies, such as the wonderful Jean and Jim Genasci from PFLAG.

This year the steering committee consists of ten lesbians, claiming to speak for the entire community.

As a gay person, to be oppressed by the straight community is offensive. To be oppressed by members of our own community is outrageous, and much more offensive. Our community gets strength from unity. Whoever oppresses one of us, oppresses all of us.

If you would like to express your support for the unity of our community, please come to the Unitarian Church in Northampton on March 15, at 7:30 p.m.: It is on Main St., directly next to City Hall. Go in the side door, into the basement.

Sincerely,
Micki Seigel
West Hatfield, MA

Making a correction

Dear *GCN*:

I must make a very important correction to the article I wrote which appeared in the February 4-10 issue (the third supplement about class) entitled "With the confidence other women have given me." When I acknowledged and thanked the women who dearly supported me through my educational ventures, I mistakenly denied the support of Linda Vance, a lawyer who teaches a Vermont College in the Adult Degree Program. It was she, along with her partner, Melanie Kaye-Kantrowitz (one of my undergraduate teachers) who gave me a scholarship to go to graduate school. In the article, I said that Melanie and Irena Klepfisz gave me the scholarship.

The irony of this mistake is painful and is worth mentioning, not only to make the correction, but to further the discussion in my article, which was in part about the financial aid I received from the women in my life. It's about how my own issues with money — talking about money lending money, receiving money — have come to betray the women who helped me.

Melanie Kaye-Kantrowitz and Irena Klepfisz, editors of *The Tribe of Dina, A Jewish Women's Anthology*, gave a reading in Boston in October 1986, along with other writers who contributed to the anthology. Over the weekend, when Melanie and Linda stayed at my house, Melanie told me that she and Linda decided to offer me a scholarship to go to graduate school. What stayed in my mind in my state of excitement and shame which made me feel dizzy to the point of not being able to stand without swaying, was that the scholarship was offered in the name of Irena Klepfisz's aunt.

I didn't want to ask anymore about it. For three years I didn't ask or talk any more about the money or its source, not facing my own confusing feelings about money offered as a gift and if I really had the right to

Strange bedfellows and strange politics

By Pam Mitchell

I've become involved in a new women's organization called TELL (Therapy Exploitation Link Line), a group run for and by women who have survived victimization by therapists, physicians, and other health care providers. Many of the instigators of TELL and other grassroots organizing around this issue are the people behind all those recent *Globe* headlines about prominent therapists and physicians being held accountable for sexual misconduct. Since so many of the falling mighty are well-heeled white heterosexual men, members of the gay and lesbian community may be tempted to dismiss this phenomenon of predatory "helping" professionals as one more sign of, as it were, "bourgeois heterosexual decadence." And indeed, the great majority of the cases do pertain to sexual exploitation and mistreatment of women at the hands of powerful white men — hardly news at all in this world, and certainly not gay news. Given that, a paper like *GCN* might choose to cover the issue under the rubric of its commitment to feminism, or because of an understanding that sexual abuse can and will be used to feed the Right and fuel homophobia to the extent that we ignore the issue ourselves.

However, there are some far "gayer" angles on the sexual malpractice beat that our queer press has unaccountably not seen fit to print much about. For one thing, there's the cause celebre and martyr deluxe of the medical professions' well-financed backlash against the movement against sexual misconduct, on Dr. Paul Bettencourt whose case received press in the *Globe*. Bettencourt is a male physician who allegedly had sexual contact with a male patient, both inside and outside of his examining room. The Mass. Licensing Board in Medicine, a state agency that hears consumer complaints against MDs, investigated the charges and revoked Dr. Bettencourt's license, and the Mass. Medical Society is hopping mad about it.

The physicians' professional organization is not happy with the Board's recent independence, or with its vigorous watchdogging of a profession riddled with powerful people who have grown notorious for mutual ass-covering and for allowing each other to get away with murder — sometimes quite literally. Using the Bettencourt case as a springboard, the medical establishment has written to doctors across the state begging them to dig deep into their overstuffed pockets to finance efforts to curb the licensing Board's power. Adjudication in licensing decisions has just been removed from the control of the Board's staff, and efforts are underway to institute a new statute of limitations and to impose extremely stringent standards of evidence on Board proceedings.

Members of the MD lobby have also been hard at work making sure that any civil and criminal legislation against sexual malpractice that emerges out of committee in the Mass. House will be as doctor-friendly as possible (*if they don't succeed in murdering it altogether*). Since many substantive and procedural questions about sexual misconduct have become closely tied to legal issues pertaining to rape and incest, feminist activists should be following these

developments carefully; precedents set on this front could have adverse effects elsewhere.

The way I read it, Bettencourt is a case of strange bedfellows making even stranger politics, as one of our society's more entrenched bastions of rightwing reaction makes use of allegations of a same-sex liaison for its own political purposes. Yet though I've read a little about the case in the *Globe* and I've heard rumors of some involvement of gay organizations and individuals on behalf of the patient, the queer press has been oddly quiet about the entire matter. I'm glad the patient's confidentiality and privacy are being respected (because believe me, it's no fun to have details about your treatment circulating around the community with your name attached to them). But aren't there some underlying issues we need to be discussing?

This dearth of coverage is consistent with the silence that prevails about other "gay angles" on the issue of sexual malpractice. Though the majority of the women who come to TELL meetings were exploited by heterosexuals and are heterosexual themselves, and the same is true of most of the people I've met elsewhere who are involved in healing and/or activism around sexual malpractice, I am not the only lesbian dealing with this issue. The tales I have heard from several lesbians and a couple of gay men about what some prominent queers have done to them would make your skin crawl if you heard them.

But don't worry, you're not going to hear them. Expensive attorneys are making sure of that. Were the gay and feminist press to take the issue seriously and choose to play a muckraker role, as the *Globe* is doing, maybe some of these stories could bypass the lawyers and come to the surface. Instead, victims are isolated as they face some cruel and limited choices that could have an impact on our entire community.

Individuals can opt to deal with their dehumanization and emotional devastation as a "private" matter to be worked through with friends and/or in therapy while their abuser waltzes around the community unscathed. Or they can go "outside" the community to a workplace complaint committee, a licensing board, or to civil court — any one of which could use their case as an opportunity to trash or undermine the gay community or particular sectors of it, and/or feed it to the press to do the same. Proposed legislation that is now in committee in the House would criminalize some forms of sexual misconduct, adding your friendly neighborhood District Attorney to the list of less-than-peachy options. Depending upon circumstances such as the financial resources of the victim/survivor, the details of the case, and the status of the offending practitioner (e.g., if s/he is unlicensed or in private practice), sometimes none of these "outside" options is available, and a victim seeking redress may be shit out of luck. Interestingly, though, when a feminist woman went to the State of California in 1988 with allegations that she had been sexually abused by an unlicensed feminist therapist, the State responded by filing criminal charges against the practitioner for practicing without a license; the story was

front-page news in Santa Cruz, where the therapist had been widely known in the women's community as a specialist in treating survivors of child sexual abuse. And don't think "it can't happen here": from the many stories I've been hearing, "treatment" around early sexual violation is being manipulated into enactments of present-day sexual abuse by an alarming number of mainstream, holistic and feminist healers.

Survivors who choose to steer clear of all of the above strategies and stay on the "private" road find that it's a rocky one. In addition to the fact that it feels shitty, it does nothing to protect potential future victims (repeat performances are common: I've run across several survivors who have actually met other people abused by the same clinician as they were). And it does nothing to clarify the gay/lesbian community's position on what we think is proper behavior between a health care provider and his/her patient. Feminist researchers have found that most patients/clients who have sexual contact with their healers suffer serious damage from it, and my own brutalized psyche and the others I've witnessed have certainly been enough to convince me. In any case, it has always been my assumption that any doctor or therapist knows that it is a definite no-no to sexualize intimacy with a client; if this isn't an assumption our entire community shares, isn't this something we ought to be discussing as a community and not in individual tete-a-tetes with our practitioners during vulnerable moments?

The "routes" of redress available to victims aren't a barrel of laughs, either. You face an opponent who is generally a very "credible" professional with the best legal counsel his/her ample cash and community connections can buy, and you also face the usual stuff that goes with the territory of public accusations of sexual violation: i.e., you might get "blown off" as vindictive or crazy or you might find yourself "on trial" for your own past sexual conduct or for any history of being sexually abused. (Pending legislation would blessedly extend the "rape shield" to protect sexual misconduct cases.)

And you face some extra "perks" for being queer. First off, there's the delightful prospect of discussing your gay or lesbian sexuality in front of a distinguished panel of (mostly) straight white affluent men. Then there's the likelihood that significant portions of your community will choose to ostracize you, or may even get misled into actively organizing against you. Thrilling, huh? If you were humiliated and disempowered by the original experience of abuse, think how you're feeling now.

This situation shifts. We give our physicians, therapists, counselors and other health care providers a lot of respect and currency of various kinds within our community. Presumably, most of them wouldn't even consider placing the welfare of their patients and their community in jeopardy by acting out sexually on the job. What are we, as a community, going to do about the others?

Pam Mitchell is a former GCN staff member who has written extensively for queer, feminist and progressive publications.

accept it.

Melanie and Linda, in trying to protect my pride, never discussed the money they sent to me every semester; so I would not have to focus on it. The respect they gave me is worth more than the gift itself. And I, who place so much value on this kind of support, inadvertently denied it. The issue of giving and receiving money, especially for women, is a difficult one. It appeared in other articles in *GCN's* class supplement and this incident bears it out.

Thank you *GCN* for giving me the space to make this correction, and thank you Linda and Melanie.

Sincerely,
Cindy Lanane
Allston, Mass.

Hello/goodbye

This week marks the end of an era as we say "hasta bastante" to Stephanie Poggi, who leaves the Features Editrix job after two and a half years. In Stephanie's five years here (she spent her first two and a half years as News Editrix) the tenacity with which she sought to make *GCN* a paper for many queer voices was only approached by her notorious "attention to detail." Bye Poge.

Taking over the Features Department is Randy features writer Christopher Wittke, who has nearly liberated himself from "the Wayback Machine," our typesetting dinosaur that Chris has nurtured for over two years. Watch out for all that natural light in your new office, Chris.

Yikes! While we're on the hello subject, belated welcomes go to Margaret Wallace and Laura Briggs. Margaret got her skirt stuck in the revolving door of the promo homo job in August (Marcos Bisticas-Cocoves' fashionable mini was stuck there for only three months) and appears determined to take us to direct mail nirvana. And in November Laura brought butch back to the local beat.

We also welcome Beth Leventhal, who's handling all our typesetting needs until we take on a desktop publishing lifestyle, and Karl Schoonover, our fabulous new intern who'll be contributing to the features department and taking on other fun projects.

Goodbye, hello, hello, hello, hello, hello!

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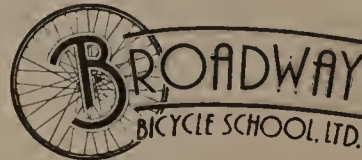
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Mandela

Continued from page 1

Mohammed said that he was particularly encouraged by one of Mandela's statements, in which he mentioned a white gay doctor who worked at Crossroads, a shanty town in Cape Town, and is currently in jail as a conscientious objector for refusing to do his military service.

Mohammed told *GCN* that he thought the gay and lesbian community in South Africa is far from unified in its support for dismantling apartheid. As evidence of the white gay community's conservatism, he cited the Gay Association of South Africa, Johannesburg's white gay group, who discouraged support for Nkoli in their newspaper, saying that Nkoli was not working on specifically gay issues.

"These guys feel that it's okay to sleep with Blacks, then go out the next day and vote fascist," said Mohammed. "They have their Black maids, and they got brought up by the Black nannies. When they would bring a Black guy home to sleep with, they would sneak him into the house. Then they would say, 'See, I'm not a racistist.'

"The Afrikaaner gay community is very big. They represent a big voting block, and politicians campaign in the gay bars and such. The Afrikaaner gays could make a big difference," he said.

Nkoli said that he is looking forward to future contact with the international community. He said that he has been invited to Ireland, and that GLOW is intending to send three delegates to the International Lesbian and Gay Association Conference in Stockholm July 1-July 7.

According to Nkoli, GLOW would like to send one white woman, one Black man, and one Indian man, but the group needs financial help from the international lesbian and gay community. Contributions should be sent to GLOW, P.O. Box 23297, Joubert Park 2044 Johannesburg, South Africa.

□ filed from Boston

Writers

Continued from page 3

expression of her fears of coming out, and, presently, her desire to deal "with women whose death had an impact on me."

"My writing," she said, "helps me to maintain my sanity in an insane world."

Best known for her successful sex bias case against the University of California-Berkeley (see related story), activist Merle Woo reflected that "I began writing when I became a revolutionary."

"Lesbians of color writers are always putting ourselves on the line, always fighting invisibility. We know that our writing can unite the movements" against racial, sexual and class oppression, Woo claimed.

Woo's poetry has appeared in several collections, including *Yellow Woman Speaks* and *Selected Poems*. She is currently a lecturer in Women's Studies at San Francisco State University.

Quoting African American playwright Lorraine Hansberry, Woo concluded, "The most radical thing we can do as writers is make our communities more human."

The writers followed their comments by addressing questions from the audience and by reading selections from their work.

"Lesbians of color," said Smith, "want to share the complexities of our multiple identities. It takes a lot of integrity and courage for us to be 'out' — much more than our white lesbian sisters — because not only are we concerned about sex and sexuality, but we are concerned about race and class as well." □

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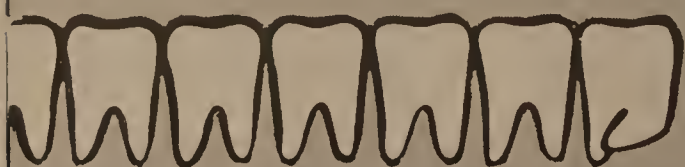
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A benefit for the Fenway Community Health Center's Building Project.
Co-sponsored by FCHC and the B.U. Lesbian and Gay Alliance.

Fenway fundraising campaign reaches halfway mark

BOSTON — The Fenway Community Health Center, a neighborhood health clinic serving many people with AIDS and lesbians and gay men, recently announced that its capital campaign for a building to house all Fenway services reached the half-way mark at the end of January. If construction and fundraising continue on schedule, Fenway hopes to be moved into the building in the Spring of 1991.

The clinic is currently providing services at four different locations in a five block area in the Fenway/Copley area. A new building would provide space for proposed new health services, including dental, x-ray, and pediatrics, and allow Fenway to consolidate existing services under one roof.

"I'm pleased with the progress we've made over the past year," said Harry Collings, associate director and head of Fenway's Building Project, adding, "We've raised just over \$1 million from a wide variety of sources. I am concerned that we still need another million dollars in order to complete the facility."

The shell of the building, located at 7 Haviland Street, will be turned over to Fenway in July, at which time another \$2 million will have to be raised in order to complete the interior build-out and assemble necessary equipment.

One part of the next phase of Fenway's fundraising will be a memorial and naming opportunities program. Individuals and groups that contribute money will be able to name a particular room or section of the building. "This is an opportunity for our community to pay tribute in a permanent and ongoing manner, to itself and to those we have lost," said Collings. "We've intentionally kept the donations for this purpose at a reasonable level to allow a number of people at various income levels to participate," he said. He encouraged people who are interested in this program to contact Fenway at 267-0900.

□ Laura Briggs

NEA

Continued from page 1

Fellowships. Of the 97 writers of prose and poetry who won the grants, three lesbians whose works have clearly included sexually explicit "homo-erotic" imagery were included. The three are: Chrystos, whose book of poetry *Not Vanishing* reflects the experiences of native peoples, lesbians and women; Audre Lorde, an African-American lesbian who has published several volumes of poetry and prose; and Minnie Bruce Pratt, whose most recent volume of poetry, *Crime Against Nature*, won the national Lamont poetry award.

In announcing the awards, which give each writer \$20,000, Frohnmayer said, "It is our hope that these grants will free writers to follow their vision, wherever it takes them." Frohnmayer also said NEA "hopes to play some small part in nurturing a literature that truly reflects the immense diversity of the United States." But how free do those writers feel to follow their vision?

Pratt told *GCN* that in her proposal to the NEA she submitted work that is "as explicitly homoerotic and political as it could be." Did the panelists who selected her as a grant recipient think her work "when taken as a whole," was artistically substantive enough to exempt it from the Congressionally mandated funding restrictions? Did they simply disregard the restrictions?

Even if the lesbian poets interpreted winning the grants as indications that the NEA is supportive of their work, whether and how the funding restrictions might affect them remains unclear. Although Frohnmayer states publicly that grant recipients should follow their visions, NEA requires those same recipients to sign a consent agreement that includes the language at the top of this article. Pratt said she wondered when she received the consent form whether the NEA might try to take back the money if she produced work with it that they deemed "obscene."

"This is prior censorship," said Pratt of the compliance form, "I'm just not going to accept prior censorship as a stipulation." Pratt said she signed the consent agreement,

but that she has no intention of "censoring myself." Part of the work she plans to take on with NEA support is a long narrative poem in which Pratt will explore a fictional character's "sexual life in a political context."

The language on the consent form sent to all NEA grant recipients is also now included on all NEA grant applications, and all NEA panelists who judge submissions are informed of the restrictions. The presence of this language not only contributes to an atmosphere of censorship, according to many arts community members, but it also contributes to self-censorship on the part of artists and arts organizations. "What it ultimately does is stop writers from writing," said Dorothy Allison, whose fiction is also clearly "homoerotic." "If a story has sex in it, then a writer won't submit that one [for a grant]. They'll just stick it in a drawer. After a while they'll just stop writing that kind of thing."

Allison, who is an organizer of an upcoming lesbian and gay writer's conference in San Francisco sponsored by *Out/Look* magazine, said she and others plan to take up the censorship issue at the gathering. Three panels will look at "The Future of Sexually Explicit Writing," "Policing Our Desires," and "Self-revelation and Self-censorship."

□ filed from Boston

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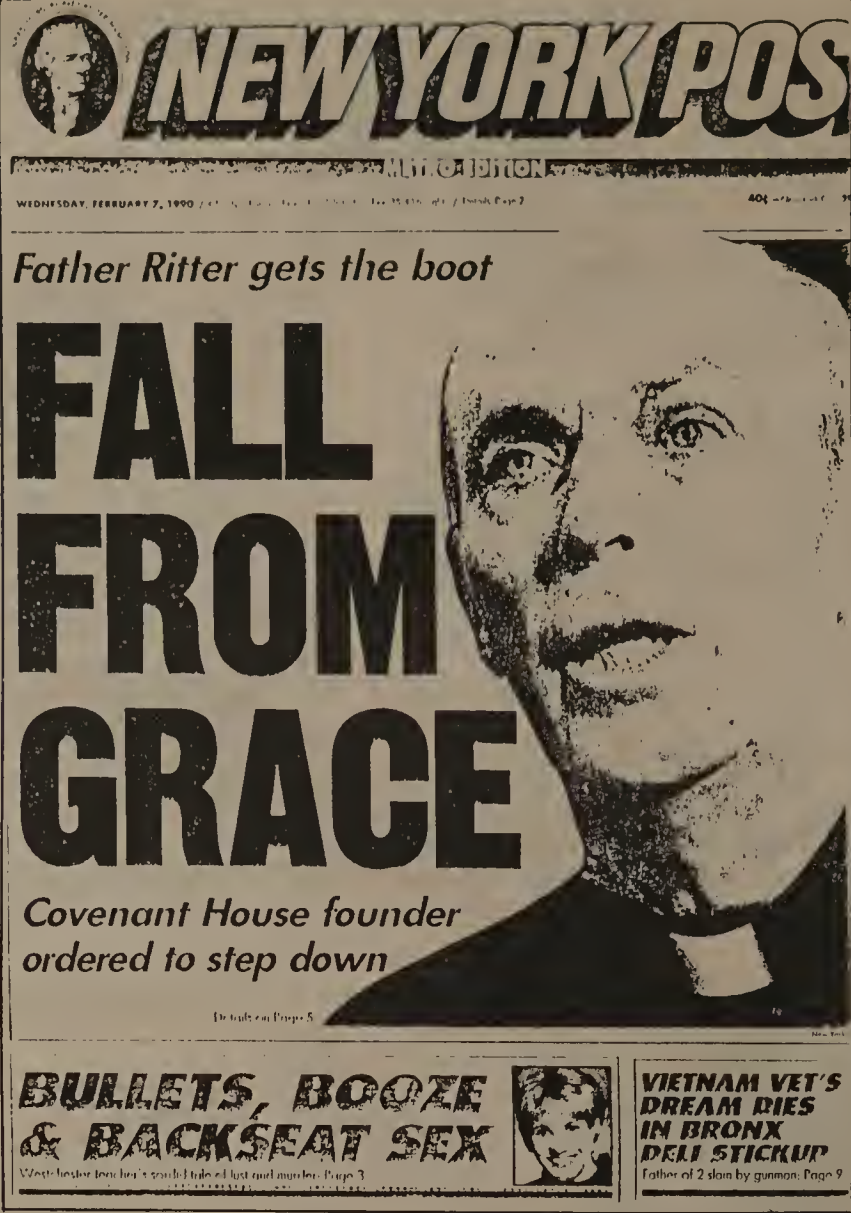
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has been true of both the Charles and Carol Stuart and the Tawana Brawley cases, as well as the media coverage of Rock Hudson's AIDS diagnosis. (Although in that instance the press spent 35 years promoting an image destroyed in one headline.) Certainly Father Bruce Ritter, moving, as he did, from urban folk hero to somewhere between a *vox populi* and *vox daie* saint, was ripe to have his reputation tested by a baptism of fire. But the issues here run deeper, and more silently, than they first appear. The ongoing story of Father Bruce Ritter, Covenant House, and the hordes of throw-away kids on the street (as well as the church, the state and the lesbian and gay community) connect and tangle in surprising and dismaying ways.

Singing the praises of an 'unsung hero'

Almost all of the pre-scandal newspaper accounts of Father Ritter's life and work refer to him as an "unsung hero," a phrase used by former-President Reagan singling Ritter out for praise in the 1984 State of the Union address. But even 10 years ago the "unsung hero" moniker was beginning to seem a misnomer. Ritter had garnered massive press coverage, awards, and national attention for himself and his work. Not that he didn't deserve it.

Ritter started Covenant House in two deserted East Village tenements in 1968 and since that time the organization has grown tremendously. In just over 20 years, a staff of 1600 in six countries has helped 200,000 runaways and street kids in 16 centers. Over 90 percent of last year's \$90 million budget to fund this massive operation was raised from private donations. The main source of fundraising for Covenant House, a monthly newsletter written in a personal tone by Ritter himself, is sent to over 800,000 potential donors. Besides large overnight crash shelters, Covenant House also runs units designed to help young people who test HIV antibody positive; for those coping with drug problems; and a program called "Rites of Passage" providing long-term housing and education.

Even in a world in which it is common for social service agencies to be ineffective and for non-profit charities to spend more income on upkeep than output, there is little doubt that Covenant House helped a lot of kids efficiently and cost-effectively. And while other social agencies have flirted with bad press, Covenant House has managed — until now — to retain an aura of saintliness about it. It was as though Ritter had been able to put into practice the unpretentious preaching of St. Francis of Assisi — founder of Ritter's chosen order — and actually change the world. Ironically, he discovered that the Saint's work was better served by computerized direct mail solicitation and high-profile media coverage than by renouncing materialism.

Singing a new song

But Saint Francis was as famous for talking to animals as he was for his ministrations

to the poor and needy. And now the "unsung" heroic songs about Father Ritter are being drowned out by a different tune entirely. In much of the scandal coverage, Ritter's special friendship with Kevin Lee Kite (the first person to level sexual misconduct charges against the priest) has been portrayed as a dalliance with a wolf in lost sheep's clothing. When the *Post* first printed Kite's (then using the pseudonym Tim Warner) report of a prolonged affair with the saintly priest, Ritter's defenders rushed to the front claiming that the story was the trashiest sensationalism and a complete lie. In fact, the *Post* had held the story for almost two months and published it only after checking and double-checking the facts. The *Post* confirmed that Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau's office was investigating Ritter for misappropriation of funds and that an inquiry was being conducted by Linda Fairstein, head of the Sex Crimes Unit, based on Kite's allegations. The *Post* was well aware of the complex politics surrounding the case and was determined not to be caught with Father Ritter's pants *not* down around his ankles.

The original *Post* articles were greeted with scorn by the rest of the press and Kevin Lee Kite was treated as a sociopath. In an attempt to establish some damage control — and discredit Kite even further — a spokesperson for Covenant House disclosed his real name and a press conference was staged after flying Kite's father up from Texas. The man claimed that his son was a pathological liar "always trying to hurt those who were attempting to help him." Both the disclosure of the false name and the press conference were, to the relief of many, big news and the *New York Times* and the electronic media played them up. Until this time the rumors about Ritter and the boy — man actually, originally claiming to be younger, Kite is 26 — had not been taken very seriously, but they also refused to go away. The DA's office was taking its time with the investigation but still maintained that Warner was a "credible witness." Most of the stories appearing in the press were written with deep sympathy for Ritter. The *Times* had an editorial urging the DA's office to complete its business as soon as possible and an op-ed piece by *ex-Times* editor A.M. Rosenthal, gave Ritter total support. Rosenthal claimed that Covenant House was in financial danger — its revenues having dipped 25 percent since the story broke — because of the irresponsible bad press.

You mean, Father Ritter might be gay?

In the news reports, editorials and commentary columns during this period there is an extreme sense of outrage that has to do not only with the charge of sexual abuse but also the implication that Ritter might, in fact, be gay. Ritter's defenders were happy to dismiss the abuse charge by attacking Warner's credibility, but they could only invoke Ritter's good works, unsullied reputation, and vow of celibacy to negate the spec-ting of his being homosexual. To these minds

it was clear that Ritter's being gay would have been in direct opposition to his status as a secular saint. It is theoretically impossible — in this line of thinking — that homosexuality and vital, successful social work could ever go hand-in-hand. *Of course* the man spent a lot on time on his knees — but in prayer, only. Ritter's defenders were anxious to distance him from homosexuality, but they couldn't have done the job any better than Ritter himself over the years.

Ritter, taking his cue from the meddlesome politics of reigning Cardinals Cooke and O'Connor, had always been a vocal and active opponent of the New York City lesbian and gay rights bill throughout the long history of fighting for it. His position as a defender and savior of youth only reinforced the association between gay men and child molestation.

He had also been appointed to the infamous Meese Commission on Pornography in 1985, and while he eagerly helped map out its most conservative and repressive stands, he actually lost a vote (8-2) when he suggested that the committee take the stand that homosexuality was less "normative" than heterosexuality.

While these attempts to influence public policy with personal theology may have been obnoxious, more serious charges have been leveled against his Covenant House policies. Joyce Hunter, the director of social services for the Hetrick-Martin Institute for the Protection of Lesbian and Gay Youth, has claimed that lesbian and gay kids have been harassed by other residents as well as by Covenant House councilors.

Even more disturbing is Covenant House's theologically based ban on distributing safe sex information endorsing the use of condoms. There have even been reports in *The Village Voice* that kids have been denied shelter at the Covenant House centers because they were caught passing out safe-sex pamphlets. AIDS activists have always been prohibited from distributing condoms in the shelters.

As insane or shocking as this may seem — especially to anyone who works with AIDS or street kids — it actually makes sense. Bruce Ritter is a priest in good standing in the Roman Catholic Church. He has a huge amount of media visibility in a city with an archdiocese run by the very conservative John Cardinal O'Connor. O'Connor is outspoken in his opposition to safe sex that is not abstinence — "Good morality is good health" he has proclaimed — and although Ritter may have been in the vanguard of caring and publicizing the plight of throwaway kids, he was not about to risk antagonizing his powerful and influential boss. Even if Ritter did want to publicly endorse condom use as a way of avoiding HIV infection, O'Connor (who treats his flock less like a good shepherd than a cattle driver making sure he gets the herd across the border into heaven) would be sure to take whatever steps he could to stop him.

AIDS activists estimate that close to 10 percent of Covenant House's residents test positively for HIV antibodies and that a great many others who hustle or otherwise exchange sex for money are at high risk for doing so. While some church authorities may consider the ban on safe sex education good morality, many lesbian, gay and AIDS activists place it more in the range of murder.

By the end of December and the beginning of January things were looking better for Covenant House and Ritter's reputation. Then in mid-January several bombs were dropped. It turned out that Kevin Lee Kite's father — who nearly discredited everything his son had claimed about Ritter — was a homophobic Baptist fundamentalist, very likely the reason Kite left home in the first place. Even worse for Ritter, it was revealed that the false identity Covenant House had attacked Kite for using was actually one assigned by the organization in the first place. Although Covenant House spokespeople won't explain why — there was some early noise about an FBI-type witness relocation program to help teen hustlers escape the mob that seems to have died down — the group provided Kite with a doctored birth and baptismal certificate secured by a priest in New York State. The papers gave Kite the name Timothy Warner. The parents of the real Timothy Warner — who died of cancer at the age of ten in 1980 — have contacted the FBI about the misappropriation of documents.

As if all this weren't enough, New York's gay and lesbian weekly *OutWeek* published an interview with Kite Jan. 21 in which he claimed — among other things — that Ritter never used condoms when they had sex. He claimed that even though Ritter preferred that Kite not go out with other men, the priest urged him to use condoms with them if he did. Kite had been portrayed in most of

by Michael Bronski

It would have to have been the *New York Post*, of course. No other paper would have had the sense of tact or charm. Next to the full cover portrait of Father Bruce Ritter that made him look like a cross between the Prophet Isaiah and Vlad the Impaler, the headline screamed: FALL FROM GRACE. And then in smaller print: "Father Ritter Gets the Boot/Covenant House founder ordered to step down."

It would also have had to have been the *Post* to have the city's best 49-point type headline and not quite get the story right. Father Bruce Ritter — the organizer, guiding light and star fundraiser of the country's largest and most famous haven for homeless teens — was neither fired nor banished. In reality he was directed by his Franciscan superiors to take an open-ended leave of absence from his duties pending the outcome of official church inquiries into sexual abuse charges leveled against him by several former Covenant House residents.

While this turn of events now seems inevitable, it was surprising. Back when the *Post* broke the original story on Dec. 13, the backlash was tremendous. Cries of "foul" could be heard everywhere from the *New York Times* editorial page to his eminence of militant homophobia John Cardinal O'Connor to former Mayor Koch, and even Rev. Ritter himself. They claimed that this time the *Post* had gone too far in its search for shock and sensationalism. And while the *Post*, owned by tabloid tsar Rupert Murdoch, has little of which to be proud, it *did* take up an unpopular story (despite its huge potential for sensationalism and sales) that would make them no friends. As *Post* president Valarie Sambor told the New York Deadline Club in a keynote speech two weeks ago: "We broke the story. We told the truth. We took the heat."

At first glance it seemed as if the Covenant House story would be no big deal. The press — especially the more sensationalist press — has always capitalized on building up news personalities and then turning on them in the belief that the public loves to idolize its heroes but enjoys it evermore when they turn out to be false gods. In recent times this

the mainstream media as a pathological liar and a sociopathic hustler, but in *OutWeek* he came across as intelligent, articulate and reasonable.

Even more damaging in content was an article published in the Jan. 30 *Village Voice* in which reporter Philip Nobile told of an earlier charge of sexual misconduct against Ritter. The report was made by a street hustler named John Melican, whom Nobile had investigated in 1987 while working for *Penthouse*. Melican claimed to have had an on/off sexual relationship with Ritter starting when he was 16 in 1973 and ending in 1986. Nobile did not follow the story through, however, because Melican was difficult to work with and Nobile had a hard time finding any corroborating witnesses. Along with the Melican interview, the *Voice* also documented much of Ritter's anti-gay activity, emphasizing the huge gap between "good morality" and good sense that seems to shape so much of Ritter and Covenant House's policies.

Three strikes and you're out?

The interviews with Kite and Melican received some mainstream media attention but not as much as the testimony of Ithaca-based Darryl J. Bassile, a 31-year-old worker at a center for people with disabilities. When Bassile contacted Ritter's superiors and they refused to return his phone calls, he went to the *New York Times* with his story. The *Times*, which until this point had avoided original reporting of the *affaire Ritter*, was as eager for a scoop as the *Post*. In an interview published in the *Times* Feb. 6, Bassile claimed to have had sex with

The Myers Mess: A Tragedy of Errors (NYC, P.11)

Wiretapped: Bronx Pals and the Mob (Bastone, P.1)

the village

VOICE

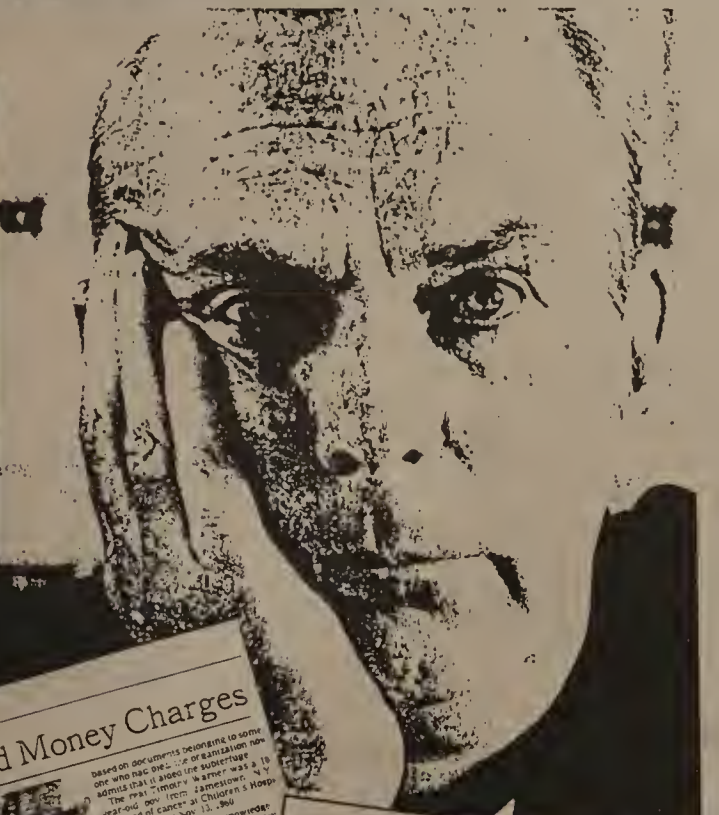
THE BOSTON MURDER (P.1)

VOL. XXXV NO. 5 • THE WEEKLY NEWSPAPER OF NEW YORK • JANUARY 30, 1990 •

New Allegations

The Secret Life of Father Ritter

BY PHILIP NOBILE (P.25)



An Eroding Image: Covenant House Is Buffeted by Sex and Money Charges

THE NEW YORK TIMES METROPOLITAN TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1990

Image of Covenant House Is Eroded by Sex Charges

Rev's leave ordered amid new sex allegations

Finally, Jets Have a Coach

Jury Gets Gotti Case



Ritter half-a-dozen times in 1973. At the time he was seeking refuge from a homeless life of street hustling and some horrific sexual abuse and violence at a Catholic-run orphanage on Staten Island, where he says he was once raped and hanged from a tree.

Bassile came forward with the story because he had been attending conferences on sexual abuse and coming to terms with his youthful experiences. He also claimed that he had no complaints about Covenant House and harbored little resentment for Ritter, he simply wanted the priest "to get help with his problems."

More than the absent Melican or the Covenant House-discredited Kite, Bassile had an effect on making the claims against Ritter be taken seriously. In the first week of February he was interviewed by Rev. Canice Connors, a Franciscan priest specializing in the sexual and emotional problems of priests. Although there has been nothing forthcoming from the meeting — and there may not be, this is an ecclesiastical investigation unlike the DA's legal inquiry — the mere fact that Ritter's religious order is even dealing with the accusations is a positive new development.

When the *New York Times* broke the Bassile story, it was obvious to all parties concerned with the scandal that the charges against Ritter would have to be taken more seriously. The tone in the editorials became more somber, defeated rather than defensive. Even the *Daily News* said in its Feb. 2 editorial that Ritter's removal from office was "sad but appropriate" after having rushed to his defense when the original story broke. On the same day as the *News* editorial, the *Post* printed a 25-paragraph-long editorial defending its coverage and claiming that whatever the eventual outcome of the charges against Ritter, the

Covenant House Board of Directors had been misguided in not taking the early charges seriously. There were still some Ritter defenders, however, and conservative *Daily News* columnist Bill Reel lamented that "headlines have destroyed the priest's career" and implied that both Kite and Bassile were "master manipulators of the press."

Lies and whispers?

At this point the Ritter controversy is in a "wait and see" period. Other boys, and ex-boys, may come forward but their testimony would probably be redundant — cumulative rather than revelatory. The big break came once the story was taken seriously by the media. In retrospect, you have to wonder, why was Father Ritter seen to be, like Caesar's wife, above suspicion, even above investigation? Is it just a case of a good man who is so well liked, so respected, so revered that any hint of impropriety is out of the question? Or are there other factors involved which made most of the New York media (and even the national media) think twice about checking to see if an idol it had helped build actually did have feet — or a dick — of clay?

To begin with, there has always been an incredible silence in the press about gay priests. But several months ago, trash religious novelist Father Andrew Greeley suggested in his syndicated newspaper column that the American Roman Catholic hierarchy has become predominantly homosexual with more heterosexual men refusing to become priests, or remain so if they are already ordained. And while this raised quite a few eyebrows, hardly anyone rushed forward with vigorous denials. Even when there have been rumors about gay priests — as there were about New York's Francis

"Fanny" Cardinal Spellman and Boston's Richard "Kitty" Cardinal Cushing — the whispers never made it to the press. In fact, when John Cooney published his biography of Spellman, *The American Pope*, Times Books (owned, not coincidentally, by the *New York Times* itself) made him remove almost all of the gay content claiming that it was insufficiently documented.

If there were rumors that Father Ritter was homosexual — and in all likelihood there were — they were not about to make it into the newspapers. This is a double-edged sword because on the one hand it is always good to have public figures come out, but on the other, the press only drags people out of the closet in order to punish or discredit them. In Ritter's case it was clear that no matter how much good the man had done, any inference of homosexuality — not to mention abuse of power and position with sexual overtones — was not going to further beatify him.

If there is a conspiracy of silence about gay priests, there is also a similar one about gay and lesbian life and culture in general. Except for the *Village Voice* no newspapers ever carried the stories of Covenant House and safe sex or the harassment of gay teens at the organization's shelters. Since most of the city's population would probably disagree with Ritter's (and the church's) no-condoms policy, this never became news because it would reflect badly on the man and his organization.

Reading through pre- and post-scandal articles on Covenant House there is almost never any mention of gay teens. It's true that some of the boys are said to be hustlers, but the implication is that they are heterosexual-ly oriented but economically forced to trick with men. And while many times this is true, no credence is ever given to the matter of

homosexual orientation. The very existence of sexually active gay teens is a grave theoretical problem for Ritter's strict system of sexual morality. Although all of the young people who come to Covenant House need help, Ritter probably considers homosex at least as morally repugnant as condom use. And, of course, it is better for both public image and fundraising to downplay the gay youth angle. While Ritter's accusers aren't necessarily gay — Kite says he is happily so, Bassile has been married and divorced twice — their claims raise not only the question of abuse but also the specific problems of gay teens and how Covenant House may or may not be dealing with them.

It is impossible to underestimate the power of the New York Catholic Church in regulating what makes it into the newspapers. There may not be direct manipulation or interference — as there apparently was in the publication of *The American Pope* — but the Cardinal is more than willing to use a great deal of political power. Any negative depiction of Father Ritter or Covenant House reflects on the Church and archdiocese. O'Connor has been adamant in his stand against gay rights, safe sex and homosexuals in general — besides having lobbied extensively against the gay rights bill, he has forbidden the gay Catholic organization Dignity from using any Church-owned building and worked against city anti-discrimination legislation designed to protect lesbian and gay workers. The New York press would be well aware of the mighty O'Connor's feelings about exposing the allegations against Ritter or

POST-SCANDAL PRESS

Covenant House.

It is a given in any article about Covenant House that Ritter's fundraising ability comes in for high praise. But what none of the coverage has mentioned is that one bonus of the massive private donations Ritter accrued is that the state government does not have to shell out money to do this necessary work. Last year the federal budget for programs like Covenant House was \$27 million. Both the mayor of New York and the governor of the state — as well as the officials of Covenant House shelters outside of New York City — fully realize that Ritter's operation saves them a huge amount of money. Any bad press that Ritter receives will — as it has — cause a drop in donations. Since the city and the state of New York are as strapped financially as the federal government, any injury done to Covenant House will also affect their budgets if forced to throw money towards the program's operating costs or — even worse — start up their own versions of Covenant House.

In a very real way Bruce Ritter's Covenant House is the prime example of George Bush's vision of a "thousand points of light." Here is private volunteerism on a grand scale that actually works. Inspired by goodness and funded by personal charity, Covenant House is the best ad Bush — and the other Reaganite private-sector theorists — could have. No wonder Bush visited Covenant House for a major photo-op several months ago. Newspapers touting Bush's philanthropic version of American do-goodism and personal boot-strap achievement would be loath to do injury to Covenant House. It is not surprising that the mainstream press would be sympathetic to the idea that personal charity is a better way

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Ritter

Continued from centerspread
to deal with social ills than expecting the state to accept the responsibility.

In spite of the big bucks, Covenant House isn't just about giving money but mainly about helping kids who are in trouble. *Of course* everyone wants to help kids who are in trouble. Who would be against it? But there is a deep seated ambivalence about children in our culture, especially about children and sex and children and abuse, and where those boundaries intersect. In recent years as child sexual abuse has become more of an open issue — thanks to those who have spoken out about it — this ambivalence has deepened. Once thought to be the sole province of “funny uncles” and homosexuals, it is now known that most child abuse happens at home, perpetrated by heterosexuals who are usually relatives. This is, understandably, an extremely frightening concept for people who hold up “American family values” as an ideal and a goal. Almost all of the kids who go to Covenant House are out on the streets because of some form of abuse by heterosexuals in family settings. They are like flashing neon signs warning that heterosexual nuclear families generally don't work.

Of course when the press talks about abused children — as it does with Covenant House and as Ritter does in his fundraising letters — it plays on the easy sympathy, the obvious pathos of young, wasted lives. But to put the situation into a wider context — that many families are dangerous for children's health and well being, that heterosexuality and prescribed gender arrangements cause many social ills; and woman- and child-hatred is the cause of most abuse — would be too repulsive to most readers of the *Post*, the *Times* or Father Ritter's newsletter.

In most of the pro-Ritter commentaries in the New York papers it was interesting to see how most writers were comfortable describing Kite and Bassile as petty but dangerous monsters bent on destruction. At the same time they lamented the fact that any damage to Ritter or Covenant House would mean that innocent street kids would not receive the help they need. But how could the press carry off this argument when both Kite and Bassile were the “innocent children” Covenant House was supposed to be saving as well as the “monsters” destroying it?

It is difficult for our culture to see children as independent and complex people with emotions, feelings and sexual impulses of their own. In many ways the prevalent image of children as “eternal victims” is a comforting one because it denies children autonomy and because the “good” adults — like Father Ritter and all of those who support him — can easily be cast in the role of saviors.

But it is also important to remember that the boundaries between “savior” and “monster” have often been blurry. Despite social injunctions and prohibitions, there is a long tradition of lesbians and gay men and pedophiles who have done groundbreaking work with young people: Lord Baden-Powell, Mary Emma Wooley, Dame Katherine Furse, M. Carey Thomas, St. Don Bosco, and Horatio Alger — as well as millions of lay teachers, priests and nuns. Generally unmarried and willing to devote their entire lives to teaching or reform work, they gained and maintained fame by remaining closeted. While not all of them acted out on their sexual desires — although some did — their students and charges certainly benefited from their dedication.

With such deep-seated cultural ambivalence about children it is a relief to the public to have a folk-hero like Ritter take control and solve all of its problems about kids. One of the reasons Ritter's fundraising was so successful is that people were more than willing to abdicate responsibility for thinking about the complex problems surrounding abuse, homelessness and young people and just let Covenant House deal with it. In the popular imagination Ritter became an almost mythic urban hero upon whom people could project their own ambivalence and fears. Ritter was the perfect receptacle for all of these feelings — a priest mandated to be good and non-sexual, out there in the streets with no other apparent desires except to help “his” children, and dedicated to his work with no other “material” distractions to take him away from his mission in life. He was a super-hero and a super-star, everyone's conscience. That is, until now. The criticism of Ritter and Covenant House has made this simple outlook impossible to maintain.

It is also impossible to judge Ritter's guilt or innocence. In fact, it is hard to decide what guilt or innocence actually are. His accusers' stories certainly seem reasonable and if Ritter did instigate sexual relationships with them against their free will, he crossed the boundaries of standard acceptable behavior for a professional in a social work situation. But in the public eye Bruce Ritter is not only being judged for overstepping a boundary but for being a homosexual, someone who had no business working with kids in the first place. Given the hysteria about homosexuals and children and sex — *a great deal of it fueled by Ritter and his church cohorts themselves* — all of the good work he has done will be tainted by the simple revelation that he is gay. We have seen this all too often.

But what we have also seen all too often is the closeted homosexual willing to work within the power structure even if it means attacking the community which might claim him as a member. In the gay community Ritter is being judged as a liar and a hypocrite whose dangerous, theologically based policies will cause more emotional harm and AIDS deaths to young gay men and lesbians than their lives on the streets.

In the long run Ritter is neither an Isaiah nor a Vlad the Impaler. Both of these are mythic figures bearing no resemblance to real human beings. Neither does the super-folk-hero image concocted by Ritter, promoted by Covenant House, and bought, packaged and re-sold by the press. Whatever the truth about Ritter's sexuality or about his relationships with Kevin Lee Kite or Darryl Bassile, it is clear that they were involved in some way with the man and not his image. It is wrongheaded to see Ritter as a victim of the press — or a victim of the conflicts between the gay community, the city, Covenant House and the Church — he has taken too many forthright anti-gay stands to convert so easily to martyr status. But somewhere in all of this is a tragedy — probably not even Ritter's — and one that you will never read about in the *Times*, the *Post*, or the *Village Voice*. It is about the inability of our society to deal with sex, to deal with AIDS, to deal with children, to deal with gayness, or to deal with the problems caused by heterosexuality. It therefore remains impossible to even *imagine* a culture in which tolerance of diversity and acceptance of sexuality is even a goal, let alone the norm. □

Michael Bronski has been writing for GCN for 15 years.

Woo

Continued from page 3
pertise, thereby giving the university the opportunity to fire her again in the future. “It's obvious they're not really serious” about implementing the arbitrator's decision, said Woo.

Woo expects to be in court again this summer when the suit to enforce the arbitrator's decision comes to trial. She and the defense committee are still looking for an attorney to take the case.

The UCB Labor Relations Department did not return GCN's call by presstime.

Woo also told GCN she plans to run for governor of California on the Peace and Freedom Party ticket. Woo, a member of the Freedom Socialist Party, said she will run on a platform that is feminist, anti-racist and “fully for lesbian and gay rights.” Commenting on the ramifications her candidacy could have for her struggle with UCB, Woo said “If I became governor, I would be an *ex-officio* member of the University of California Board of Regents, and I would go in there with a broom!” □ filed from Boston

Conn.

Continued from page 3
Applause from the crowd signalled a mixed reaction. While some appeared to support the demonstrators, others, probably most, cheered when Murphy removed the banner.

Reaction from the elected officials was also largely negative, and few legislators, even those supportive of gay rights, seemed to understand the reasons behind the action.

According to Capitol police, the ten women and two men who were arrested are the first ever to be charged with “interfering with the legislative process” in Connecticut. “We didn't call it ‘breach of peace,’ but ‘interfering with the legislative process.’” Continued on page 11

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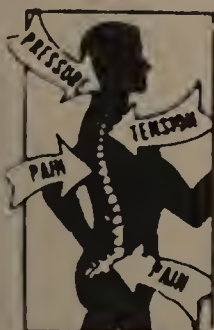
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Banana appeal

Genderfucking drag fag Abe Rybeck may be stepping behind the scenes for his first full-length musical, Blame it on the Big Banana, but his naughty sexcapades and rad politics are as upfront as ever

By Karl Schoonover

"Gay liberation is not about gaining people's approval," says Abe Rybeck, probably best known as the driving creative force behind Boston's limp-wristed/firm-fisted performance troupe, the United Fruit Company (U.F.C.). But Rybeck may receive lots of approval from his fans as he embarks on what he describes as "the thrill of my life" — mounting a workshop production of his first full-length musical, *Blame it on the Big Banana*. The extravaganza, directed by Richard Toma, follows a drag queen troupe as it ventures on a cultural exchange mission to Nicaragua.

Rybeck's way-out work has always been of an extremely public nature: from the U.F.C. performances outside bars to entertaining at demonstrations and gay pride celebrations, and even performing for a crowd of over a hundred in someone's living room.

The arena for Rybeck's current work is Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Kresge Little Theater. For some, MIT may seem like an odd home for his usual brand of political outrage. Could it be that Rybeck's work has taken a turn toward legitimacy? Is he one step closer to mainstream success and forgetting his gaudy past? Never. *Blame it on the Big Banana* will not disappoint any of Rybeck's followers. In fact, he pretends not to even understand the word legitimacy. "My heart will always be in the street. My mind in the gutter."

Neither Rybeck nor the usual Fruits will be performing in this south o' the border burlesque, but he promises that the new troupe of queens in this musical will blast through the conventions of political theater: "The show is full of romantic beach scenes, CIA intrigue, glitzy marketing gimmicks, bathroom sex, mysterious shootings, star-crossed lovers, dramatic courtroom revelations, diplomatic shenanigans, and kinky sex toys...you know, autobiographical stuff."

Over the years Rybeck has dreamed up many a remarkable character, among them old favorites Madge the manicurist for Contra Aid ("The blood of innocent people? You're soaking in it.") and Tallulah Blankhead. This time around there's Bolivia Newton-John and Rosa Buxomburg. But you'll never find one Pat in his cast of characters...or more specifically, no pat answers. Through his theater work Rybeck hopes to change people's notions of the word "political." "There aren't easy answers," he says. "Traditionally 'political'

Conn.

Continued from page 10

which is a more serious crime, said Murphy. All 12 arrestees were released on a \$250 non-surety bond and a promise to appear in court Feb. 23. The charge carries a maximum fine of \$1000.

The arrestees, who were held for about an hour while their arrests were processed, said that, despite some rough handling as they were escorted out of the gallery, the police treated them respectfully and cordially.

"I feel exhilarated," Tracey McDougall, one of those arrested, told *GCN* after her release. "Completely exhilarated."

Shawn Lang, another arrestee, echoed, "I feel great. We silenced O'Neill," Lang told *GCN*, "We're setting the rules. We're here. We're taking the power back. Like the June action, this was a feeling of real empowerment."

Last June 9, at the close of the 1989 session that saw the defeat of the gay rights bill, several lesbians and gay men also protested from the gallery, but no arrests were made. (See *GCN*, June 25, 1989). However, the Feb. 7 action was more dramatic, marking the first time in the state's history that the governor's opening day message to the legislature was disrupted. Also, a much larger crowd witnessed this action, which pleased activists.

Although the protest was carried as a top story by many of the state's newspapers and T.V. and radio stations, coverage glossed over the action's motivations and focused



Abe Rybeck

has meant yesses and noes. But no one really knows. If Abe Rybeck were so right the world would have changed by now."

Rybeck's work shines a glaring spotlight on the surface of things to reveal their barely concealed contradictions. *Blame it on the Big Banana* exposes such contradictions in everything from the U.S. class system to how ridiculously the government tries to keep up appearances in Central America. A case in point is Rybeck's wildly original song "Down There," which he describes as "A tango which points out that Reagan spoke of Central America the same way he talked about his colon."

Behind the clear cut facades of gender and politics Abe Rybeck finds chaos, and it is that chaos that fuels his hilarious antics. He is a fag with a mission, constantly calling in to question class comforts; demanding that his audience questions things that it may take for granted on a daily basis. "People can't just work for equality in South Africa," he says for example, "and then ignore racism in their own community."

Abe Rybeck's work reminds post-Stonewall queers that many of their political roots lie in a bunch of rioting queens in a working-class bar. If there is an essence to Rybeck's vision of liberation, then it lies in making a scene in public. □

Blame it on the Big Banana will be performed at 8 p.m., Thurs.-Sat., Feb. 22-24, and at 2 p.m., Sun., Feb. 25 at MIT's Kresge Little Theater, Mass. Ave., Cambridge. Tickets are \$10. Info and reservations: 262-1207.

Karl Schoonover is *GCN's* features intern.

on negative reactions the demonstration may have provoked. In what some activists called a hostile move, the *Hartford Courant* listed the names, addresses and ages of all those arrested. Although that information is available to the public, the *Courant's* action was contrary to the paper's usual procedure.

Gay and lesbian activists in Connecticut have become increasingly militant and visible in the past few years. Many attribute the new militancy to the AIDS crisis, the defeats of the gay rights bill in 1987 and 1989, and the gay-bashing murder of Richard Reihl in 1988. The Lesbian and Gay Direct Action Committee formed after Connecticut ACT OUT, the state's first lesbian/gay direct action group, disbanded last year. The committee, in addition to major actions such as the Capitol protest, sponsors visibility dinners and other public demonstrations.

The group says that rather than discouraging further protests, the arrests will energize local activists. The group's statement ended with a promise, "We refuse to disappear, Governor O'Neill, at the end of the General Assembly, at the beginning of the General Assembly, and at every ongoing General Assembly until the message of our members becomes the passage of a lesbian and gay civil rights bill — first demanded in 1973 and long overdue in 1990." □

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A prisoner told us that **FREE** copies are available of: Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure; Fed. Rules of Appellate Proc; Fed. Rules of Civil Proc; and Fed. Rules of Evidence.

Write to: US House of Representatives, Committee on Judiciary, Washington DC 20515. (They have run out of copies before, so don't be surprised if you don't get anything; but they may have made some more !)

If you have an extra stamp, please let GCN know if this info is still right or not. THANKS!

GM 26 Puerto Rican seeking Bi or GM for friendship. I'm HIV positive and very much enjoy reading your paper. It's very lonely here. I'll answer all letters. I go by 'Eddie'. Eduardo DIAZ, EF-230070, D-119, Box 7150, Garden City GA 31408.

My friends call me 'Stephanie Lynn' but I happen to be in prison, so I have to be written by the name below. I'm 34, long hair, and a smooth sexy nicely shaped ass. I'm very femme, a transsexual, into very handsome masculine men. I'm enrolled to become a paralegal. Thank you for your help. Thomas CHADWICK, 84279, Box 128, Eddyville KY 42038.

I am 27, have a very nice body, and my likes are boatin, fishing, camping, riding horses and being with other gay guys. I would like to write someone. Willie IVEY, Box 137, Tillery NC 27887.

I am a political prisoner who strongly believes in fundamental freedom and self-expression. I am currently writing a book of esoteric and erotic poetry. I'm seeking an interesting, unconventional friendship. I'm not materialistic, meaning that I value things such as strength and honesty above money. Hoping someone would like to write. JERMARR, ARNOLD, C-81494 (W-342), Box 2000, Vacaville CA 95696.

I did receive the GCN which I DO enjoy reading! and I will share it with my gay brothers (and 'sisters') in this cold place. The thoughts of persons like you is what help us to feel better and believe in ourselves. I would very much like to be able to write someone as a friend. Facundo ALVARADO, 84B 396, Box 149, Attica NY 14011.

29 yr old handsome gay male, jock type, college grad, into music and literature. Non smoker. Lonely. Please write. David FIGLUS, 148706, 2500 S. Sheridan Rd, Muskegon MI 49443.

I've been on my own since I was 14. Since I've only known hustlers, thieves, druggies, etc. I'd like to inquire if someone of your readers (of GCN) would like to become friends with me and to write. I'm gay, 27, enjoy all sports and music, art work and long conversations. Steve LaPOINTE, 096836 (A-N-10), 3950 Tiger Bay Rd, Daytona Beach FL 32024.

GM, nice build, doing life in Folsom, enjoys sexy letters. Hobbies are pumping iron, sports, reading, writing and art. Would love to hear from anyone interested in corresponding with a gay boy for fun and adventure. Willie 'Lucky' SOUZA, C-15595, A1-122, Box 29, Represa CA 95671.

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I'm a 25 yr old butch. I'd like to write with some feminine lesbian. I enjoy sports, music, and anything gentle. Ernestine ('Tino') EDWARDS, Box 9007, Framingham MA 01701.

I'm 19, gay, and am looking for a very feminine female. I'm alone and need friendship. Please write. Monica WILSON, 152298 (576), PO Box 8540, Pembroke Pines FL 33024.

My interests are swimming, bowling, singing, writing, poetry, music, movies and the Bible. Will be coming home soon. Can't write other prisoners. Deborah ROWE, OA1452, Box 180, Muncy PA 17756.

Gay man looking for friendship or long lasting relationship. I have brown hair and eyes and am very, very lonely. Terry WILSON, 155445, Box 900, Jefferson City MO 65102.

Lonely Black Butch Bisexual Male seeking lonely bisexual male or female for longterm penmanship. I'm 33 but feel 23. Please write me at: Hillard LONDON, B-048279 (211), Housing 3, Box 628040, Orlando FL 32862.

I admire and would like to write a person of high principles and honest nature. I'm 23, Black and Portuguese/Italian. That's all you get for now. Indulge yourself. Gianni GOMES, PO Box 29, D-97767, Represa CA 95671.

Gay male seeks correspondence with anyone! Age, sex, or race unimportant. Interests include movies, NAMBLA, and traveling. Prisoners welcome. Charles ALLEN, 463146, Rt 1 Box 1, Huntsville TX 77349.

I would like to write some gay or bi men who are understanding. I was put in here for 'intent' when I have no physical crime at all. Thank you for your time. Daniel PALOZIE, 061824, Box 747, Starke FL 32091.

GM, 27, Italian with sleeve tatoos, enjoys the submissive end of S&M. Sometimes enjoys being fisted, but even a fist can't fill the void in my heart. I'm lonely. I'd like to write someone who might be interested in a friend. David WYRICK, 088145, Box 500, Olustee FL 32072.

Looking for FOREIGN penpals!

I would like to have a penpal in another country if someone is interested? Joe LYNN, 150978, 3-C-21, 1012 W. Columbia, Farmington MO 63640.

Gay male, 26, 6'7", 225 lbs, seeks penpals for friendship. Interests include poetry, sports, and reading. Due to leave prison in 1991, but for now I'm all alone. Ronald CAMPBELL, N-30537, Box 711, Menard IL 62259.

I've been gay for 28 yrs of my life (I'm 38 now). We are at the bottom of the list in here. I'm not asking for pity, just some understanding and some good conversation, which is far and in between in here. Keith LAMBERT, 095045, U-1-N-11, Box 747, Starke FL 32091

GM, 26, into everything except 'beets'. Lover of Bach, the beach, beer, and the bar. Life is hard and full of strife; write me so I can add you to my life. Scott JONES, D-69777, Box 500, Bed 389L, Chino CA 91708.

I have seen and experienced a lot and have stood up and fought a lot for my rights, which I know your readers do also. I would like to seek friendship by writing someone if possible. Edwin ANDERSON, 35824, Box 2, Lansing KS 66043.

THANKS for your info on JOBS, Here in MO. they won't take the time to respond. That's how the pointy-toed, shit-kickin, goat-troopers treat gays here. I'd like to write someone. Race, color and looks not important. Please write. Mark TWILEGAR, Box 900 — 168816, Jefferson City MO 65102.

Hi! I'm looking for someone to share something special with, including ideas and feelings and problems (and joys!) of our lives. I will send photo if you like. Michael JENKINS, 149682, PO Box 7 (2-D568), Moberly MO 65270

I'm a gay male and would like to meet someone I could develop a meaningful relationship with. I'm 32, but look early/mid 20s, with smooth hairless body. Sexually Fr A/P, and Gr P. Rick FROBETER, 873216, Box 30, Pendleton IN 46064.

Looking for MUSICIANS !!!

I'm an Afro-American drummer from New Orleans and I would like to hear from other musicians, either male or female. I can't write other prisoners. Rodney DUNN, 183353, 500 Orange Ave Circle, Belle Glade FL 33430.

Calendar



23 Friday ☐ Kelly Edwards and Lea DeLaria in **Dos Lesbos** to benefit FCHC's Building Project. Sleeper Hall Auditorium, 871 Commonwealth Ave., Boston. 8pm. \$12, \$15.

Calendar listings must be received by the Monday before the week of the event. Photos encouraged. Please specify if event is/is not wheelchair accessible and/or sign language interpreted. Please use our format as a guide for listings and put each event on a separate sheet, if possible. Listings must be typed. No phone calls, puh-leeze!

17 Saturday

Somerville ☐ **Heart Throb**, a benefit dance presented by Gays and Lesbians of Somerville and Surroundings, featuring The Girlillas. To benefit Respond, a shelter for battered women and their children. Stephen James House, 1 Davenport Road, Porter Square. 8:30. \$5 in advance, \$7 at the door. Lisa, 628-2532 or Mike, 628-2643.

Boston ☐ **Prime Timers**, an organization for older gay males, monthly meeting at the Lindemann Center, 25 Staniford Street. 1:30-4pm. \$1.

18 Sunday

Cambridge ☐ **After the Lovin'**, post Valentine's dance party to help send Boston's lesbian soccer team to the 1990 Gay Games. Old Cambridge Baptist Church, 1151 Mass. Ave. 8pm-midnight. \$5.

19 Monday

Cape Cod ☐ **Gay Men's Support Group** holds a meeting at the First Parish Unitarian Universalist's Dawes Hall, 1969 Main Street (Rt. 6A), Brewster. 7:30pm.

20 Tuesday

Boston ☐ FCHC's Living Well Series for people affected by HIV, presents **The Letter "W" for People Who are HIV-positive** at 338 Newbury Street. 6:30-8pm. Paul or Robb at 267-0900 to preregister.

Boston ☐ **Gay Fathers of Greater Boston** present guest speaker Dr. Marshall Forstein, at the Lindemann Center, 25 Staniford Street. 8-10pm. 742-7897.

21 Wednesday

Jamaica Plain ☐ **Gay and Lesbian Neighbors of J.P.** meet at Doyle's Cafe on Washington Street. 6:30pm. Mike, 327-5669.

Boston ☐ **The Coalitlon for Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights** meets at the Les/Gay Service Center, 338 Newbury Street. For info call 828-3039.

22 Thursday

Boston ☐ **GCN Production Night**. All welcome. Proofreading starts at 5pm. Paste-up after 7pm. 62 Berkeley St., near Arlington and Back Bay T-stops. Info, GCN: 617/426-4469.

Boston ☐ FCHC's Living Well Series for people affected by HIV presents **Taking Care of Ourselves: New Attitudes for Public Safety**, 338 Newbury Street. 6:30-8pm. Paul or Robb at 267-0900 to pre-register.

Cambridge ☐ **Blame it on the Big Banana**, a musical-comedy burlesque by Abe Rybeck, premieres in a workshop production at MIT's Kresge Theatre. Through 2/25. Thurs.-Sat., 8pm. Sun., \$10. 262-1207.

23 Friday

Boston ☐ **GCN Mailing**. Come help stuff the paper and meet new friends. 5-10pm. 62 Berkeley St., near Arlington and Back Bay T-stops. Info: GCN, 617/426-4469.

Jamaica Plain ☐ Red Shades Affinity Group presents the films **Illusions** and **International Sweethearts of Rhythm** at J.P. High School, 144 McBride Street. \$5. more or less. Wheelchair accessible.

Boston ☐ Kelly Edwards and Lea Delaria in **Dos Lesbos** to benefit the FCHC's Building Project. Sleeper Hall Auditorium, 871 Commonwealth Ave. 8pm. \$12 in advance, \$15 at the door.

24 Saturday

Jamaica Plain ☐ **Gay and Lesbian Contra Dance** at the First Church of J.P., corner of Center and Eliot Sts. 8-11pm. \$5.

Dorchester ☐ **Mardi Gras Party** sponsored by Dorchester GALA. 8pm. For more info call 825-3737.

Boston ☐ **Meeting Men**, a workshop for gay men sponsored by AIDS Action Committee. 51 Stuart Street. 10am-3pm. For more info call 437-6200, ext 298.

25 Sunday

Boston ☐ National Coalition for Black Lesbian and Gay's Second Annual **National Day of Remembrance for Black Gays and Lesbians**. At the Les/Gay Service Center, 338 Newbury Street. Sponsored by the Boston Coalition for Black Lesbian and Gays. 3-5pm.

March 1 Thursday

Boston ☐ **GCN Production Night**. All welcome. Proofreading starts at 5pm. Paste-up after 7pm. 62 Berkeley St., near Arlington and Back Bay T-stops. Info, GCN: 617/426-4469.

2 Friday

Boston ☐ **GCN Mailing**. Come help stuff the paper and meet new friends. 5-10pm. 62 Berkeley St., near Arlington and Back Bay T-stops. Info: GCN, 617/426-4469.

Weekly events

Saturday

Boston ☐ **The Boston Area Rape Crisis Center** new training session for hotline. 617/492-RAPE.

Boston ☐ **Gay Boston**, with Jim Voltz. Boston Neighborhood Network, channels A3 and A8. 7:30-8pm.

Boston ☐ **Body Electric**: healing with group sensual massage for gay and bisexual men. 551 Tremont. 7:30pm. \$12. 522-9164.

Sunday

Boston ☐ **Boston Alliance of Gay and Lesbian Youth (BAGLY)**. Open to youth age 22 and under. 35 Bowdoin St. 2-5pm. 523-7363 or 1-800-42BAGLY.

Boston ☐ **Metro Healing healing group** for everyone. Metropolitan Health Club aerobics room, 209 Columbus Ave. 7:30-9:30pm. 426-9205.

Boston ☐ **The Gay Dating Show**, WUNR 1600 AM. 10:30pm-2:30am. Lesbians and Gay Men.

Boston ☐ **ALATEEN Group** open to lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth, 22 and under. 338 Newbury Street, rm. 202k. 6pm-7:30pm. Dave, 629-2518 or Frank, 666-8912.

Boston ☐ **Metropolitan Community Church** meets for worship and fellowship at 131 Cambridge Street. 7pm. 437-0420.

Monday

Cambridge ☐ **Healing Circle** group healing. 5 Upland Rd. 7:30-9:30pm. \$5 suggested. 864-1989.

Cambridge ☐ **Lesbian Rap**. 2/19 Bisexuality, 2/26 Can women be sexist? Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 8-10pm. Free. 354-8807 (TTY/voice).

Boston ☐ **Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights** holds bi-weekly planning meeting. Les/Gay Service Center, 338 Newbury Street. 7pm. 776-6956.

Tuesday

Boston ☐ **Gay Fathers of Greater Boston** meet 1st and 3rd Tues. of the month. Lindemann Ctr., 2nd fl. 8-10pm. 742-7897.

Boston ☐ **Gay and Lesbian Support Group for Adult Children of Alcoholics**. Faulkner Hospital. 8:30-10pm. Intake interview required. 522-5800 x1908.

Boston ☐ **Lesbian and Gay Freedom Trall Band**. No audition necessary. YWCA, 120 Clarendon St. 7:15pm. Kathy, 424-7025 or Gary, 267-6186.

Providence, RI ☐ **ACT UP/Rhode Island** open meetings. Rocket, 73 Richmond St. 7pm. 273-7228.

Boston ☐ **ACT UP/Boston** meets to confront the AIDS crisis. Gay and Lesbian Service Center, 338 Newbury Street, Rm. 203. 7pm. 49-ACT UP.

Cambridge ☐ **Bisexual Women's Rap**. 2/20 Living Situations, 2/27 Involvement with difficult personalities. Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 7:30-10pm. 354-8807.

Cambridge ☐ **30-plus Lesbian Rap** 7-8:30pm. 2/20 Living in the Boondocks, 2/27 Setting limits. The Women's Center (see above).

Cambridge ☐ **Women For Sobriety**, a self help group for women recovering from addictions. Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 8-9:30pm. 354-8807.

Arlington ☐ **Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays** meets on the second Tuesday of every month at First Parish Unitarian Church, 630 Mass. Ave. 7:15pm. Info: 547-2440 or 508/562-5807.

Wednesday

Boston ☐ **Boston Alliance of Gay and Lesbian Youth**. Open to youth age 22 and under. 35 Bowdoin St. New persons' meeting 6pm; women and men meet separately 6:45-7:30; general meeting at 7:30pm. 523-7363 or 1-800-42BAGLY.

Boston ☐ **Bisexual Children of Alcoholics**. Mass. General Hosp., lower amphitheater 7:30pm. 259-1559.

Cambridge ☐ **Say it, Sister!** WMBR, 88.1 FM. 7-8pm.

Boston ☐ **Women's Self-Defense Classes** sponsored by Women's Self Defense Collective. Studio 3, 731 Harrison Ave., 2nd floor. 6-8pm. \$10-\$35 sliding scale per mo. 625-1115.

Cambridge ☐ **Lesbian Al-Anon** with childcare. Women's Center (see above). 6:30-8pm.

Thursday

Northampton ☐ **Valley Gay Alliance** meets 1st, 3rd Th. every month, basement of the Unitarian Church, 22 Main St. 7:30pm. 413/527-5310.

Stoneham ☐ **Incest Survivors Group** for women. New England Memorial Hospital, 5 Woodland Rd. 5-6:30pm. Sara Epstein, 979-7025.

Cambridge ☐ **Wise Woman Tradltion Herbal Medicine and Women's Wlsdom Classes**. Sliding scale. Whitewolf, 277-8232.

Boston ☐ **Boston Area Rape Crisis Center** drop-in group for women who have been raped. 492-RAPE.

Cambridge ☐ **Incest Survivors Group**. Women's Center (see above). 7:30-9:30pm.

Cambridge ☐ Non-offending **male sexual abuse survivors** group meets first Thursday of every month. Cambridge Ctr. of Commerce conference room, 859 Mass. Ave. 8:30-10pm. \$5 donation. 498-9881.

Friday

Worcester ☐ AIDS Project-Worcester **support group** for HIV positive, PWAs, PWARCs, supporters. Open to all lesbians, gay men. 51 Jackson St. 7-9pm. Dana 508/755-3773.

Boston ☐ **Healing group** for everyone. Santa Fe Hair Salon, 528 Tremont St. 7:30-9:30pm. 426-9205.

Internal Affairs. Directed by Mike Figgis. With Andy Garcia, Richard Gere and Laurie Metcalf.

By Elizabeth Pincus

I'm a big-time sucker for homoerotic crime movies, even though the "homo" element is too often dangled as a mere limp tease. Or worse, a gay angle is used to imply sophistication, but ultimately serves to portray a character's degeneration or "perversion." Still, there's a grand and often wryly humorous tradition of same-sex attractions in the crime genre: from '30s gangster films to Hitchcock's *Strangers on a Train* to the perfectly sanguine *Lethal Weapon* series, male buddies on all sides of the so-called law cavort through clandestine capers, winking their undying loyalty. There are even a few (albeit very few) women's examples. Remember Debra Winger and Theresa Russell scoping each other out in the otherwise unremarkable *Black Widow*?

So imagine my pleasure at anticipating a new crime thriller, *Internal Affairs*, starring the sleek *GQ* duo of Andy Garcia and Richard Gere, along with tough-as-nails fellow cop Laurie Metcalf (who also plays a cop and sister on TV's *Roseanne*). All kinds of queer undertones, I thought, along with the promise of a taut, sinister tale of corruption. My kind of movie.

But no. The corruption in *Internal Affairs* turns out to be all in the hands of the filmmakers — director Mike Figgis and screenwriter Henry Bean — who present one of the vilest, most woman-hating films to be churned out of Hollywood in some time. The entire movie hinges on the men abusing each other's wives (and their own) to demonstrate the breadth of their manhood. The fact that Metcalf plays the part of a relatively dignified lesbian character is little compensation for the smarminess of the film as a whole.

Internal Affairs concerns the predatory relationship between two Los Angeles policemen, experienced street cop Dennis Peck (Gere) and fresh-from-the-academy internal affairs officer Raymond Avila (Garcia). While trying to dig up dirt within the L.A.P.D., Avila begins to suspect Peck of masterminding the most heinous corruption in the department. Along with his senior partner Amy Wallace (Metcalf),

The hope for queer undertones in this detective flick is dashed by misogyny



Richard Gere (l) and William Baldwin in 'Internal Affairs'

Avila sets out to expose the sneering, condescending Peck. Other cops and robbers get caught in the blood-soaked crossfire, while Peck and Avila engage in an increasingly vicious grudge match that goes from flirting to jeering to fisticuffs, and always involves a verbal volley about pussy. In one of the movie's only humorous moments, the justifiably irritated Wallace says to Avila, "Why don't you both just whip 'em out and I'll tell you guys which one is bigger?"

Yes, penis size is one unifying theme of *Internal Affairs*, and breast size runs a close second. (Though in classic objectifying fashion, we see tons of lurid breast shots and nary a single glimpse of a cock.) Except for Wallace, every woman in the film struts her kittenish self in magically tight outfits. They are tarted up and teased and willing to strip at the slightest gesture from Dennis Peck, and many of them are brutally victimized. (Read: beaten or murdered.) All of this abuse, which critics have had the gall to

describe as seductive, takes place amidst pseudo-artistic backdrops accompanied by cartoonish dialogue. Case in point: "You don't need a sable brush, yours is fine. You just need to dip it more often." Prrr. Prrr.

Internal Affairs doesn't shy from the most hackneyed sexist convention in the book. A woman is verbally assaulted, hit and left crumpled on the floor by her jealous husband. Soon thereafter, she comes back to him, professes her innocence and looks at him with wet eyes; they fall into a passionate embrace. As if to say, "That's what I needed from you all along, my darling." The movie lets out its racist steam, too, in a scene in which Avila, a Latino cop, gets angry. Presented from the outset as an aloof, controlled, stereotypically cool guy, Avila suddenly gets pissed and explodes with a venomous stream of Spanish. As if this "hot-blooded" release is tied intrinsically to his heritage. What started as an interesting set-up — a Latino cop dealing with his white,

racist colleagues — fizzles into just another reprehensible element of the movie.

As for homoeroticism, after a few glimpses of the despicable Peck (who knows if Gere does a good acting job? He's just a mirror-shaded mask of evil), I lost any curiosity about all the suggestive stare-downs. I suspect director Figgis exploited the appeal of his hunky leading men by throwing these in, along with a couple of gropes, but any real spark between the characters is banished early on as they start the loathsome battering of wives. There's no gay male subtext here. Just marketing. And Metcalf does an admirable job as the closeted lesbian, though her prim attire and do-good ways make for a rather sour character. Nonetheless, I enjoyed her semi-butch delivery, especially the scene where she tips her hand to Avila by eyeing a comely woman with humorous panache. I just wish this scenario were in a different movie; in *Internal Affairs*, it reeks of the shallow misconception that dykes are just like the guys.

As a thriller, *Internal Affairs* works to some degree, though I found myself not caring. The twists, turns, surprise revelations, unexpected snuffings, etc., are played out amidst an entirely flat, deadening storyline. The most interesting element in the film is the lack of loyalty among the men, the constant double-crosses that heightens the aura of paranoia in the guys' clubhouse (the precinct). But even this glimmer of substance is spoiled when Avila responds to the edginess by trashing his wife. *Internal Affairs* remains misogynist to the very end, with Peck sputtering some hypocritical nonsense about loving his family. I guess this is supposed to be ironic. □

Elizabeth Pincus writes movie reviews and detective fiction.

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